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PASS TO NRC

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [ETTC](#) [PARM](#) [IN](#) [NSSP](#)

SUBJECT: PRESSING INDIA ON NSSP PHASE II

REF: A. NEW DELHI 1751

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 1752

[1](#)C. STATE 38837

Classified By: DCM Robert O. Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In the absence of MEA Additional Secretary Meera Shankar, who is on extended travel for non-proliferation and C/T dialogues in Australia and the UK, PolCouns flagged the need for progress on Indian export control legislation to keep the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) initiative moving in separate March 7 meetings with MEA Joint Secretary (Americas) S. Jaishankar and MEA Acting Joint Secretary, Disarmament and International Security (DISA), Venu Rajamony. PolCouns and Poloff encouraged GOI interlocutors to use a US non-paper describing the quid-pro-quo in Phases Two and Three (Ref C) to help overcome skepticism among some officials in India's civil nuclear and space establishments about how India will benefit from the NSSP. Neither GOI official responded substantively, but both reaffirmed the GOI commitment to the export control understandings attached to the NSSP. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) In a meeting with DISA Acting Joint Secretary Rajamony, PolCouns highlighted the upcoming visit of Secretary Rice as an opportunity to define where Indo-US

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relations should go in the coming months and as a precursor to a possible POTUS visit later this year. PolCouns encouraged the GOI to use the impetus of these visits to overcome current bureaucratic obstacles and advance our common NSSP objectives. PolCouns noted that the US has asked to see India's draft export control legislation before the next NSSP Implementation Group meeting is scheduled. PolCouns also raised several onward proliferation cases (Refs A and B).

[1](#)3. (C) PolCouns reiterated Ref C points in a separate meeting with J/S (Americas) Jaishankar. Reviewing his recent meetings in Washington, Jaishankar underscored the importance of US flexibility toward India's civil nuclear program, and stressed that the GOI does not want to renegotiate the NSSP quid-pro-quo. On the issue of nuclear fuel supply, Jaishankar stated that he thought a "liberal interpretation" of the NSG rules "is within the realm of possibility." On matters where US assistance to India's civil nuclear program is constrained by US legislation, he asked that "if the US can't be helpful, at least don't be unhelpful" (i.e., by not allowing other countries to assist). Jaishankar was optimistic that a bilateral Energy Dialogue could be a forum for the GOI to explain the full range of India's energy needs, adding that NRC Commissioner Merrifield had already done much to promote this idea in Washington after his recent visit to India.

[1](#)4. (C) In response to PolCouns' query about how the GOI might capitalize on the Secretary's upcoming trip to New Delhi to keep the NSSP moving, Jaishankar said that the GOI is carefully considering its approach to her visit. Some in the GOI did not "properly understand the entirety of the Indo-US relationship," he opined, adding his hope that these attitudes could change in the course of other Cabinet-level visits expected over the next few months.

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